

Sustainable House Day  
The Nillumbik Trail  
Sunday 21 April 2024

## POST EVENT REPORT



PREPARED BY  
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FOR CLEAN ENERGY NILLUMBIK

# EVENT OVERVIEW

*It's local and the topic is important.*  
2024 attendee

<p><b>HOUSES AND HOSTS</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 7 houses opened from St Andrews, Hurstbridge, Research and Montmorency</li> <li>• 2 new builds, 2 substantial renovations, 3 retrofitted homes</li> <li>• Romney Bishop offered additional information about scorecard assessments at one of the Hurstbridge houses.</li> </ul>
<p><b>TOURS AND BOOKINGS</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tours ran at 10am, 11am, 12pm, 1:30pm, 2:30pm and 3:30pm for 6 homes and the morning timeslots for 1 home</li> <li>• 268 people booked 360 tours through 115 unique bookings</li> <li>• 86% attendance rate, ie 14% no shows/late cancellations</li> <li>• CEN volunteers supported hosts at every house with one touring around to collect photographs.</li> </ul>
<p><b>ATTENDEES</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The majority of attendees (82.6%) were from Nillumbik and neighbouring suburbs.</li> <li>• Most heard about the event from Nillumbik Environment and Sustainability E-news (27%), social media ((15%), word of mouth (15%), Renew (14%) and CEN eNews (12%).</li> <li>• More than two thirds of the 115 bookings have not previously attended a CEN event.</li> <li>• 52% of survey respondents had little prior understanding of sustainable housing and most rated the event 4 or 5, out of 5.</li> </ul>
<p><b>OUTCOMES</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All but 2 survey respondents are planning to implement what they learned - 20 out of 31 will definitely make changes to their homes, with 9 more considering options.</li> <li>• Detailed actions are noted at the end of this report, including immediate draught proofing through to planning new builds with sustainable principles - siting and thermal efficiency.</li> </ul>

# ABOUT THE EVENT

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A combination of generous and knowledgeable hosts, committed and friendly volunteers and a tried and tested tour format has delivered a successful fifth year of The Nillumbik Trail.

Clean Energy Nillumbik's (CEN) participation in Sustainable House Day (SHD) was enabled through Practically Green funding from Nillumbik Shire Council (NSC) and the enormous volunteer efforts of CEN volunteers and the open house hosts. NSC Environment and Communications staff provided great support in the promotion of the event.

CEN once again engaged Janine O'Connell as Event Coordinator to liaise with home owners and volunteers and arrange ticketing and support visitors in the lead up and on the day. This ensured well resourced, professional event delivery, smooth running of the day for home owners, volunteers and visitors.

For the national SHD event, Renew returned to in-person, open house visits this year for the first time since 2019. They adopted a new model, similar to what CEN has done for the past 2 years, scheduling set tour times with limited visitor numbers. They provided online bookings charging a fee for the first time. CEN appreciates Renew accepting our Community Partner event with separate bookings and no visitor fee to allow wider participation. In spite of a couple of houses withdrawing from The Nillumbik Trail due to changes in personal circumstances, once again Nillumbik representation was well above the national average – 7 of around 100 houses opening across Australia. The Renew SHD website was understandably not designed to highlight Community Partner events and they were generous in making adjustments along the way in response to feedback. If they continue with the same website for the 2025 event they will be better positioned to support Community Partner events for this new format.

The event was also widely supported by numerous community groups and local businesses who assisted with promotions such as sign boards, flyers, posters, social media sharing and inclusion in their newsletters.

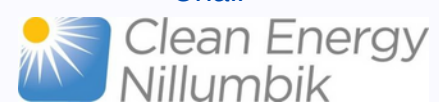
Clean Energy Nillumbik extends a warm thanks to all of the individuals and organisations who made the event such a success.



Proudly supported by

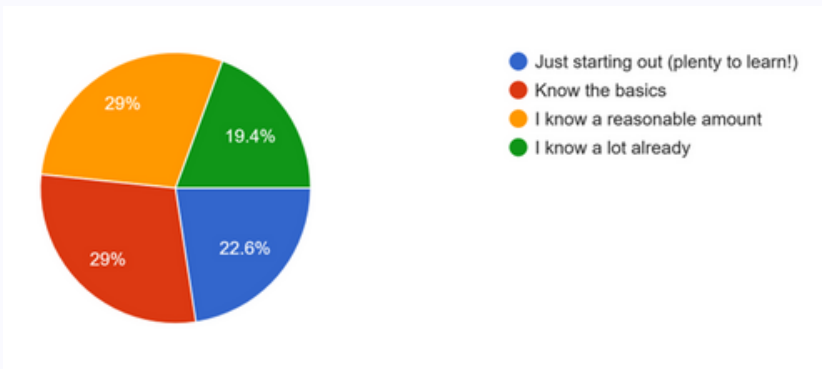


Chair



# ATTENDEES

This event continues to reach a new audience, with less than a third previously having attended any type of event run by Clean Energy Nillumbik. It is also attracting people in the early stages of learning about sustainable housing (51.6% of survey respondents), including one wanting to find out “how we can start our sustainable home journey”.



*We've just purchased our first home and we are keen to make it more comfortable in a sustainable way.*

More than 80% of the 115 unique bookings were from residents of Nillumbik or neighbouring suburbs.

Suburb	Bookings	Percentage
Eltham & Eltham North	33	28.70%
Montmorency	12	10.43%
Hurstbridge	9	7.83%
Diamond Creek	8	6.96%
Greensborough	8	6.96%
Research	8	6.96%
North Warrandyte	4	3.48%
Other Nillumbik : Briar Hill, Cottles Bridge, Doreen, Kangaroo Ground, Nillumbik, Panton Hill, Wattle Glen, Yarrambat	13	11.30%
Non-Nillumbik : Ascot Vale, Avonsleigh, Boronia, Clifton Hill, Hastings, Kew, Kew West, Lower Plenty, Macleod, Mill Park, Mitcham, Plenty, Preston, Sandringham, Viewbank	20	17.39%



# ATTENDEES

## Why did they come?

31 attendees responded to the survey, most saying they came on the house tours to learn and gather ideas :

- Getting information on how to retrofit a 1980s house to make it more energy efficient & liveable
- As an American from Maine, to learn more about sustainable housing in the hot dry climate of Vic.
- I want to move towards making my house more comfortable with the fluctuating Melbourne temperature, in the most efficient way. I visited houses to get ideas.

*Interested to learn about ways to make my home more sustainable, in particular, more energy efficient and hear from a local who had done it themselves!*



For some it was general :

- To see and learn and feel inspired.

Through to specific:

- “Learn about heat pumps and hydronic heating.”

## What inspired them?

Survey respondents noted useful tips about permaculture, electric heatpumps, Nickel Iron batteries, secondary glazing of windows, simple cost-effective draughtproofing measures and learned that formal assessment of energy efficiency can be organised.

“I liked hearing the different approaches they’d taken to complete their goals.” Several comments indicate a better understanding of key considerations when planning a new build or renovation.

- Don't build too big build for your likes and use good materials and insulate well :) and lots more we learned.....
- Find what you're interested in , research and go for it .. any home has the ability to be improved.

# TOURS AND BOOKINGS

“Many thanks to the home owners. 2024 visitor”

360 tickets were booked by 268 individuals (after excluding early cancellations). 115 groups came mostly in pairs, some on their own and others with 3 or 4 in their group. Some people targeted one house, with many seeing two houses.

Tours were run at 10am, 11am, 12pm, 1:30pm, 2:30 and 3:30pm at most houses with a capacity of 8 to 12 people per tour.

86% of bookings were attended (309 check-ins recorded), ie: a No Show rate of 14%. This included people who since apologised for not turning up because of a sick child or running late from a previous tour.



Most survey respondents felt the tours were about the right length of time (22) or they could leave if they needed to, or stay and ask questions (6). Only three people thought they were too short.

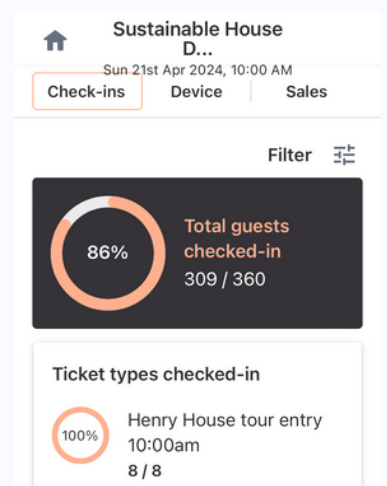
All felt they were provided enough information about the event with most suggestions for improvements about parking.

Bookings were taken using the Humanitix ticketing system, which is not designed for the format of this event (multiple tours at various times and locations) but has been adapted to meet most of the needs of the public, the hosts and the volunteers. Volunteers managed the live Humanitix app well for checking in visitors.

This allowed 16 bookings to be made on the day and 10 on the previous day – an additional 54 tickets. Resourcing the maintenance of the system to support last minute bookings is very worthwhile to maximise participation.

Most attendees were comfortable with the booking process: “Easy, simple and just right number of visitors per visit.” Although things to note for future is some ticketing errors caused confusion in the beginning before being corrected, and the SMS notification didn’t work as per previous events due to a change by the service provider.

Otherwise, most people felt well supported, given we are stretching a free system to work for our idiosyncratic event. “Excellent. When I accidentally double booked, it was picked up by your team and the 'extra' ticket redistributed. You were onto it!”



# HOSTS AND VOLUNTEERS

This event is only possible through the generosity of people opening their homes to their community and sharing their experiences. Of our 7 wonderful hosts, 6 have done this event before and the other one has done Expert EcoChats with CEN. Hosts enjoyed the interaction with their visitors but found they didn't get much of a break.

Their highlight?

"The excellent, interested and interesting people who came to visit and the feeling of giving to the community."



*Hosts were very passionate, interested and great representatives for sustainability housing*

*The home owners were fantastic and their tours were really interesting and informative, thank you!*

Equally without volunteers 'on the ground' at every house in a CEN t-shirt, it would be impossible to coordinate the public and support the hosts conducting tours. As the friendly face of Clean Energy Nillumbik, they are also able to offer further information to visitors to help them in learning more about sustainable housing.

Comments from volunteers about attendees:

- Very respectful and curious attendees, thirsty for knowledge and very supportive, as usual! They ranged from young families to older couples, renters and owners.
- Meeting people with all kinds of issues to solve and promoting assessing as a profession
- Keen individuals looking for alternatives mostly to improve their own homes.

Highlights:

- Being in the Home Patch garden all day in the beautiful weather. It was very inspiring for me as I want to grow my own veggies!



# EVENT PROMOTIONS

Many promotional channels were used to get the word out about the event and some people referred to more than one, for example they saw the ad board and a facebook post. The 115 bookings came from the 129 sources listed:

Channel	Bookings	Percentage
Nillumbik Environment and Sustainability E-news	35	27.13%
Facebook	19	14.73%
Word of mouth	19	14.73%
Renew Sustainable House Day	18	13.95%
CEN eNews	15	11.63%
OTHER sources , including flyers, adboards, Roundabout and the Nillumbik Shire website	23	17.83%

Once again the Nillumbik Enviro E-news is important in publicising the event and the decision to align with Renew's national Sustainable House Day was beneficial in translating to bookings. Although we had a few more attendees coming from far away suburbs.

Respondents to the survey were more likely to have heard about the event through CEN (50%) than the people booking (11.63%).



## Cafe Vouchers

Coffee vouchers were offered to event attendees to bring additional custom to local businesses.

87 vouchers were redeemed at the four cafes involved this year.

The vouchers were valid for a week longer, resulting in expanded use with A Local Baker in St Andrews reporting several visitors in the following week travelling some distance to redeem their voucher.

*Coffee was a nice surprise!  
The free coffee vouchers is a lovely idea. Good way to support local businesses too.*

### PARTICIPATING CAFES:

A Local Baker, St Andrews  
Black Vice, Hurstbridge  
Piccolo Meccanico, Diamond Creek  
Small Plates, Eltham



# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE EVENTS

*Please keep doing the Nillumbik trail.*

In line with our continuous improvement approach, there are a few factors to consider to ensure the success of future events.

- There were still some late arrivals to tours, although less than previously. In future, perhaps more briefing to hosts about the time allowed for tours and to volunteers of their role. Or consider less tours with more time between them.
- Volunteers used the Humanitix app with relative ease and this allowed late bookings, including during the event with everyone able to rely on live data. A WhatsApp group chat allowed us to assist people on the day.
- Once tours started booking out, some hosts were asked to increase their tour capacity and they agreed, so even if a couple of people didn't turn up there were still good group sizes, in some cases as originally planned.

Aligning with Renew's national event paid off with many bookings resulting. In future, the NSC may wish to consider becoming a Council partner to Renew for Sustainable House Day and using their booking system. However, the volunteer power of a community group like CEN is absolutely crucial to making this event work. For example, Banyule Council was only able to help one house to open on the day, and only for the morning.



*Thank you so much for organising this event - it was a really easy way to demystify making homes in our region more energy efficient and sustainable.*

CEN have so far been unsuccessful in securing future funding for this event from NSC so participation in the 2025 event and beyond is uncertain. We would welcome any recommendations for resourcing what is increasingly growing as a local community event and excellent vehicle for the essential changes needed for Nillumbik's Climate Action Plan.

The ultimate success of the 2024 Nillumbik Trail is highlighted in the following list of actions planned by some of the survey respondents. Peer to peer communication is well established as a highly effective mechanism for change, yet there are few opportunities to facilitate it. Showcasing local examples of sustainability through Sustainable House Day not only enables those essential conversations with hosts and between visitors, it also illustrates clear pathways to action.

# APPENDIX: ACTIONS TO RESULT FROM THIS EVENT



## **Specific actions attendees are planning to take:**

- Will look at solar heat, diverting grey water and double glazed windows
- Yes definitely. I would like to change the way our tanks are plumbed. Install glazed windows, maybe install solar, install pelmets.
- We liked the My Home step by step energy plan handout. It gives us a good idea of working out where we want to start. Also seeing the equipment such as the heat pumps and honeycomb blinds was beneficial.
- We would like to install a solar system, improve our house seal and add insulation.
- Making the house as airtight as possible and insulate better in the roof!
- Need to move for other reasons so next house is the project. Will look to get another split system for current home and try to seal some of the cracks to the outside elements.
- Good list of local providers for the different types of energy efficient / sustainable alterations would be great. e.g it was good to get names of double glazing providers and the various options for doing so (from cheap to very expensive) possibilities from Lucinda at Hurstbridge and also the Burstall home owners.
- I am just about to build, so I can incorporate some knowledge from the house owners I met ... re insulation, materials etc
- I will install some insulation - wall & ceiling & then a heat pump for hot water.
- Would consider door seals.

# APPENDIX : ACTIONS TO RESULT FROM THIS EVENT

## **Specific actions attendees are planning to take (cont...):**

- Current water tank on lower part of block so pump required but would like to think of a more ongoing way to disperse the water. In future would like to change in-house water usage to tank when available and install filter etc.
- Installing solar panels, double glazing windows, install roof insulation and also get a scorecard done.
- Double glazed doors, some sort of house battery and maybe a wood heater.
- We will apply our learning - application of insulation into internal walls, thicker roof insulation, replacing some windows with double glazed windows, covering over evaporative cooler in winter months, putting up outside blinds to the north face of the house for summer months.
- Replacing single glazed windows with double glazing.
- My main priority is getting off gas and hopefully replacing my current ageing gas hot water service and cooktop with newer, more efficient electric options.
- Given the age of my home (70s build), I'd love to learn more about how to make it more energy efficient and improve the thermal envelope through increased insulation, glazing, reducing draughts etc
- Buying windows and doors on ebay is a great tip from HomePatch. Lucinda was a font of knowledge. Rosie and Grants house was also inspiring for the smaller budget.
- Adding redwater system to water inlets, cost of windows still a big factor.
- Installation of solar panels and electrification to match our budget.
- We'll progressively make improvements to our house to improve thermal and energy efficiency.

